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DE RUEHBU #1216/01 1731539
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 221539Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8480
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//
RULGPIA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 001216

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STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
WHA/EPSC
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; ARGENTINE ANTI-TERRORIST LEGISLATION;
CHAVEZ; DOHA ROUND; 06/22/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's most important international stories cover the questioning of Argentina's antiterrorist legislation based on some gaps which could lead to human rights abuses; Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's reasons for pushing Nicaragua into Mercosur; and the view of Latin America and the Caribbean about the Doha Round.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "Passage of anti-terrorist legislation"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (06/22) "Through the Criminal Code amendment approved by Argentina's Legislative Branch, the country implemented the UN Convention to repress terrorist acts. While the passage of the legislation will avoid the sanctions announced by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)... and Argentina needed to introduce new anti-terrorist legislation in the post September 11 international scenario, the truth is that the Argentine Lower House hinted that a more thorough analysis should have been made to prevent distortions and (human rights) abuses.

"... The legislation was drafted based on FATF recommendations but, according to some experts, some legal gaps could give rise to (human rights) abuses in implementing the legislation. We all expect the new legislation to become a useful tool in the global war against international terrorism through a cautious and reasonable implementation that will fully honor our national constitution."

- Chavez, on the verge of an abyss"

Business-financial "El Cronista" (06/22) carries an op-ed piece by Humberto Toledo, former Argentine Ambassador, who writes "Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez seeks to broaden his political horizon through the four Mercosur member-countries... However, the Brazilian Congress is an obstacle for him ...

"If the Brazilian Congress does not pass Chavez' entry into Mercosur..., the Venezuelan leader will miss the opportunity to preside over the institution before the end of 2007 and, therefore, two major political projects of his expansionist policy could fall - on the one hand, starting a discussion about Cuba's return to the OAS with the support of Mercosur, and, on the other hand, proposing the entry of Nicaragua, Iran's brand-new partner, into the bloc in order to make Iran's presence in the region official.

"... Mercosur by-laws have a democratic clause hindering the entry or stay of countries with dictatorial regimes in it. In this regard, Chavez is walking on the verge of an abyss and causing problems for loyal partners such as the Argentine president, who for now has kept silent regarding the attack on freedom of expression launched by

Chavez against a TV channel.

"However, President Kirchner will have to make a decision sooner or later regarding Chavez's reason for pushing Nicaragua into Mercosur, as a first step to open a trade relationship with Iran and obviously seeking to broaden the scenario of confrontation with the US."

- "The Doha Round - the view of Latin America and the Caribbean"

Business-financial "BAE" carries an opinion piece by Jose Luis Machinea, Executive Secretary of CEPAL (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), who opines (06/22) "Last February, the Doha Round negotiations were resumed following more than six months of suspension..."

"This round, defined as the Development Round, acknowledges that the multilateral system emerging from the 1993 Uruguay Round was an insufficient engine for development. In spite of the progress made from the old GATT, the Uruguay Round was unable to tackle the challenges posed by its increasing number of members. Many developing countries are still unable to take advantage of a more stable and predictable ruling system.

"... A strong multilateral system has proven to benefit developing countries. The developing countries that are members of the WTO have learned to build coalitions among themselves and even with developed countries to defend their interests. The G20 and other groups seek to ensure that the outcome of the Doha Round will be balanced. This is a significant change vis-à-vis 20 years ago and reflects the importance of the WTO as a forum of negotiations for developing countries.

"For Latin America and the Caribbean, market access, particularly for agricultural products, is a central issue of the Doha agenda..."

"... It is in the framework of the WTO that developing countries have been able to successfully tackle claims against protectionist policies. There is no other international organization in which developing countries can efficiently challenge these kinds of policies.

"Current negotiations should be concluded by the end of 2007. The countries whose policies negatively impact trade with developing countries should mostly be held responsible for this. If this objective is not achieved in the next weeks, we could have to wait several years before negotiations are resumed in the framework of the WTO - an unfortunate scenario for developing countries."

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